UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/73
25 January 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 19 JANUARY 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instruction from my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith a letter dated 5 January 1999 from His Excellency President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, concerning the current situation in Sierra Leone (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fode M. DABOR
Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 5 January 1999 from the President of Sierra Leone addressed to the Secretary-General

Current security developments obliged me to revert to a matter which was the subject of my communications to you dated 13 October 1998. You may recall that, upon receipt of my letter, you strongly urged that my Government adopt a conciliatory approach in dealing with the situation. I immediately acted in accordance with your suggestion and my spokesman even made a public statement to the effect that President Charles Taylor and I were doing everything possible to ameliorate the situation.

Regrettably, it would appear that my conciliatory approach and persistent efforts to maintain friendly and cordial relations with President Charles Taylor are being interpreted by him as a sign of weakness and a lack of resolve on my part. There is a mountain of evidence that the current rebel offensive in Sierra Leone has been initiated and sustained by the Government of Liberia. I am aware that President Charles Taylor has publicly denied most categorically that his Government is involved in the rebellion in Sierra Leone. For my part, I can emphatically affirm that these denials of President Charles Taylor are not credible. We have concrete proofs that arms, personnel, logistics and moral support for the rebels emanate from the Government of Liberia with the clear intention to destabilize Sierra Leone. We know for certain of the five camps in Liberia which are used to train rebels who are then sent across the border to fuel the rebellion, commit atrocities and retard our economic development programmes.

We also know that the large number of mercenaries who are actively engaged in the current offensive entered the territory of Sierra Leone from Liberia. Our natural resources, particularly diamonds, are handed over to President Taylor by the rebels, and this is the means by which the rebellion is financed and fuelled in Sierra Leone.

My Government is gratified that the deepening involvement of the Government of Liberia in the rebel activities in my country is at the present time being fully appreciated by the wider international community.

For some time we have been warning about this, but is only now when the involvement has greatly increased, with greater and destructive damages, that alarm is being expressed by many Governments.

As you are aware, I personally have done everything humanly possible to reach an understanding with President Charles Taylor so that he can leave my country and people in peace. Your own efforts, as Secretary-General at Abuja, and those of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Envoy of the President of the United States of America, are glaring examples. However, we cannot allow ourselves to be swayed, by denials and unworkable proposals about border surveillance and joint patrols, from realizing the enormous dangers ahead for all of us. There is grave risk that, should my Government respond in kind to President Taylor's continued activities, the resulting escalated conflict would

certainly destabilize the subregion. This is why my Government urgently expects the Security Council, through you, to take urgent action to arrest this deteriorating security situation. The Security Council has shown determination to deal firmly with the rogue States in other regions of the world. Our subregion deserves no less.

Please be informed that my Government is prepared to leave no stone unturned to avoid a cataclysmic development in our subregion. That is why my Government has responded most favourably to all initiatives aimed at a speedy resolution of the situation in Sierra Leone. The recently concluded emergency meeting of the Committee of Six of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) made further suggestions about contacts between President Charles Taylor and myself.

Despite my great disappointment over President Charles Taylor's behaviour, I will not hesitate to give serious consideration to suggestions emanating from the Committee of Six of the ECOWAS countries.